



The Rail Gunner Weekly

41st Fires Brigade



1-21 FA



2-20 FA



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U.S. and ISF partner for clean-up



Kids put on rubber gloves and get trash bags before joining the Iraqi Police, Iraqi Army and U.S. Soldiers who partnered together for a community clean-up during Numanayah Pride Day May 9.

By Sgt. 1st Class Joe Thompson, 41st Fires Bde. PAO

By Sgt. 1st Class Joe Thompson
41st Fires Bde. PAO

Iraqi Police and Iraqi Army Soldiers walked the main street in Numanayah with U.S. Soldiers, picking up trash together to show the cooperation between the forces and improve community relations.

"We wanted to achieve something for our city and we can do that by helping to clean our city," said 1st Lt. Muhenned Sattar Jasim, 1st Company, 1st Battalion, 32nd Iraqi Army Brigade.

"It shows the people that we are here not only to pull security, but by working together with the IPs and U.S. Forces in cleaning the streets, the people can see that we are really here to help them out," said Muhenned.

Soldiers from Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery Regiment have an ongoing partnership with the IA Soldiers from 1st Co., and the IPs in Numanayah.

"I think this was a lot more successful than I could have dreamed of," said Capt. Rich Turvey, Btry. A commander. "I really think the citizens took a hold of it and came out in mass. I was expecting about 50 people and I think we hit closer to maybe 300."

Joining the group of Soldiers in the clean-up were dozens of kids who enthusiastically raced ahead of the group, filling up their trash bags. Muhenned

hopes that their example will resonate through the community.

"For sure we are going to motivate the citizens here in the city to start to help themselves and by cleaning up the city," said Muhenned.

"I told the mayor and I talked to the Iraqi Army, when we do this we wanted to just plant the seed of the fact that they can take ownership of their city and make it a place that everybody wants to come to and make it safer and cleaner for their children to play and grow up in," echoed Turvey, from Kalamazoo, Mich.

Improving the streets of Numanayah as well as improving the reputation of the Iraqi Security Forces was the goal of the "Pride Day," said Turvey.

"I appreciate all the support from the Iraqi Army and the Iraqi police; they were hesitant at first but I think that we've proven to them that this is something that can be of value and puts a better face on it for them and for the people here," said Turvey.

"The people are happy for all the security forces out here, and we are proud in helping and participating in cleaning and picking up trash in the city because it is our city. We are proud to be a part of it," said Muhenned.

This was the fourth "Pride Day" that the Soldiers of 2-20 FA Regt., coordinated in each of the towns that they are partnered with Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police throughout Wasit province.

AB-, B- blood donors still needed after pre-screen

By Sgt. Allison Churchill
41st Fires Bde. PAO

A blood donor pre-screen held at the FOB Delta troop medical clinic May 9 filled requirements for all but two blood types.

The lab technicians would like to find more potential donors with AB- and B- blood in case of emergency.

"Just in case we ever have a MASCAL or needed whole blood," said Sgt. Chuan Tran, medic, 10th Combat Support Hospital.

The TMC doesn't have the resources to store blood, so if there is a mass casualty event or other need, more than one donor with each type of blood would need to donate.

Tran, of Sacramento, Calif., said the best donors would be Soldiers or civilians who can get to the TMC within 15 minutes getting the call to donate.

Donors also can't be pregnant, afraid of needles, HIV positive or a recipient of a blood transfusion within the past three years, said Tran.

Those who volunteer to be pre-screened will donate seven tubes of blood, which takes about 15 minutes, said Tran. The samples are sent to Balad for testing – if there is a problem with a sample, Tran said the donor will be told the reason by e-mail.

"Donating blood is a good thing, a good cause," said Tran.

Residents of FOB Delta who meet the requirements and have AB- or B- blood to donate can contact Tran or his noncommissioned officer-in-charge, Staff Sgt. Andrew Gittens at 844-2736.

Tran invites everyone to "give some blood to save a life."



Sacramento, Calif., native Sgt. Chuan Tran, medic, 10th Combat Support Hospital, prepares blood samples to be sent for further testing at Balad. The samples were donated by potential donors during a screening May 9 at the FOB Delta troop medical clinic.

Photo by Sgt. Allison Churchill, 41st Fires Bde. PAO

Longtime Gunner prepares for new role



Left: Command Sgt. Maj. Kelvin Hughes (left), 41st Fires Brigade, administers the "Oath of the First Sergeant" to Master Sgt. Antwone Reese just before his lateral promotion to first sergeant in the brigade conference room May 8. Reese has held a variety of positions in the brigade through its transitions from 4th Infantry Division Artillery to 4th Fires Brigade to 41st Fires Bde.

Right: Brigade commander Col. Dick Francey promotes Reese. The new first sergeant is scheduled to take responsibility of Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery Regiment, 41st Fires Bde., on May 15. Reese most recently served as the liaison between the brigade and Multi-National Division -- South.

Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Joe Thompson, 41st Fires Bde. PAO

IPs, MPs partner to improve community relations

By Sgt. 1st Class Joe Thompson
41st Fires Bde. PAO

Iraqi and Military Police partnered together for "Operation Backpack," delivering over 250 backpacks filled with school supplies to the Sukaina School for Girls May 6.

IPs from the Old Izza police station in Kut led the humanitarian aid mission while Soldiers from 2nd Squad, 2nd Platoon, 772nd MP Company helped by delivering the backpacks to the IPs who then handed out the bags at the school.

"This is very beneficial to the students because they are getting supplies to help them with school," said Suhad Naeen Hethel, school manager.

"It is also good because it shows the cooperation between the Iraqi Police and Coalition Forces," she added.

The school is located right next to the Old Izza police station, and the station commander said he hopes these type of projects will help to change the behavior of the school-aged children towards coalition forces.

"Today went very well and I hope to continue to do these types of projects in the future so that the children see that they should throw flowers at the coalition forces instead of rocks because of all the help the coalition forces have given them," said Lt. Col. Thanwan, Old Izza IP station commander.

Community policing missions are different than the normal police training missions that the MPs normally concentrate on and according to 1st Lt. Tyler Field, platoon leader, 2nd Plt., these missions are important in improving the IPs relations with the community.

"The IPs were the ones handing everything out and the children, along with the teachers, saw the IPs giving back to the community," said Field, of Bridgewater, Mass. "It's going to go a long way with community policing."

"Operation Backpack" is scheduled with other IP stations that the 772nd MP Co., partners with and it's always a good time when they get to do something that benefits the community.

"I just enjoy doing this stuff," said Sgt. Matthew Dubuc, squad leader, 2nd Squad, 2nd Plt.

"Just seeing the smiles on the kids faces definitely means a lot, and it shows that they really appreciate what we try to do for them," added Dubuc from Pawtucket, R.I.



Sgt. Stephen Barden from Hull, Mass., 2nd Squad, 2nd Plt., 772nd MP Co., transfers backpacks to the IP truck before "Operation Backpack" kicks off at the Sukaina School for Girls May 6.

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Joe Thompson, 41st Fires Bde. PAO



A girl races back to her classroom after receiving a new backpack delivered by the IPs from the Old Izza police station May 6.

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Joe Thompson, 41st Fires Bde. PAO

Worship Opportunities Sunday

<i>Chapel 1</i>	
Traditional Protestant	0900
Latter-day Saints	1030
Gospel Service	1300
Reconciliation service	1830
Catholic Mass (English)	1930

Monday

<i>Chapel 1</i>	
Catholic Mass	0800

Tuesday

<i>Mayor Cell</i>	
Bible Study	1930
<i>Chapel 1</i>	
Bible Study	2000

Thursday

<i>TMC</i>	
Bible Study	1930

Saturday

<i>Chapel 1</i>	
Catholic Mass	0800
Christian Movie Night	2000

Deployed dad inspired by poem from daughter

Staff Sgt. Andrew Gittens, originally from Jersey City, N.J., lab technician, 10th Combat Support Hospital, received this poem from his daughter, Annaleesa, and shared it with his fellow medics in Task Force Delta Med, hoping to inspire them.

In the photo below, Gittens and Annaleesa nap after his family picked him up at the end of the Primary Leadership Development Course in Fort Benning. When not deployed, Gittens is assigned to the Department of Clinical Investigations, Brook Army Medical Center in San Antonio, where Annaleesa is waiting for him.

Photo courtesy of Staff Sgt. Andrew Gittens

*Everyday you're gone is a bore;
Every day I miss you more and more.
You're so far away;
Hey what can I say you're fighting for the USA.
He's an American Soldier; He'll protect your shoulder.
He's an American Soldier bold and free;
He fights for people like you and me.
There's only one more thing I have to say,
I'm proud of my daddy each and every day.*

By Annaleesa Gittens



Re-enlistment



Left: Col. Dick Francey, 41st Fires Brigade commander, administers the Oath of Enlistment to Sgt. John Vilchez, of New York, a member of the brigade command group personal security team, May 8 in front of brigade headquarters. Vilchez re-enlisted for four years in Germany.

Below: Cpl. Theodore Martin, a fellow PST teammate, congratulates Vilchez after the ceremony.

*Photo by Sgt. Allison Churchill
41st Fires Bde. PAO*

